

June 2008

Why The Red Thread?

In Sweden, educators explain that they view education as a lifelong journey, and they visualized education as a thread connecting all aspects of a person's life from early childhood through old age. When they speak of life-long learning, they speak of the red thread. Hence, the name of our report!

The Center for International Understanding partnered with UNC-Chapel Hill's FPG Child Development Institute to bring two delegations of North Carolina education leaders to Sweden, one in 2003 and another in 2005. Study group members included education policymakers, preschool administrators, teachers, and higher education leaders and students.

This report presents findings from the groups' exploration of Sweden's internationally renowned system of services for young children and their families. The Swedish philosophy that children are important to the health and future of the country was evident in public policy, written materials, oral presentations and, most importantly, in the interaction between teachers and children.

We believe that exploring another country's promising practices in early childhood education can help us improve the way we educate North Carolina's youngest students. We hope this report offers helpful guidance to our state's Head Start and More at Four programs as well as teachers, parents and administrators in all regions of the state who are committed to quality early childhood education.

Sincerely,

Meredith Henderson

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The University of North Carolina